

Thank you very much for inviting me to be part of this anniversary celebration. It is truly an honor.

Winston Churchill once said, “Americans always do the right thing, after they’ve tried everything else first.”

I think in a lot of respects the various organizations that were your predecessors which put into place, for truly noble reasons, systems and programs to serve those economically disadvantaged of our country, were going through the “trying everything else first” phase. From laying waste to whole neighborhoods under the rubric of urban renewal to high rise house structures that made poverty and related crime worse which no one thought was possible. The “war on poverty” strategies were a beginning but the wild enthusiasm for “funding the new scheme of the week”, would become catch phrase in political process,

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AND KEEP CHANGING
THE WORLD!

quickly lost even it's most ardent supporters. But our mistakes was our teacher and through the give and take of the political system our democracy has spawned a system that truly serves the needy, that which you are an integral part, and are "doing the right thing".

Your twenty years of existence is a manifestation of that aphorism and is what every religious philosophy teaches: to help your fellow man. As someone once said, "You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips." I believe that this agency and all it's staff does just that. Because what you do for people on a daily basis is truly remarkable. It says to anyone listening that, with the right mix of talented, dedicated people and creative programs WHO's success is measured not by dollars invested or hours worked but rather in terms of lives saved and families rebuilt.

Joseph Campbell must have had you all in mind when he said

“When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of conscienceness.”

I know that at times it's frustrating and disheartening. But that comes with the territory: there's never enough money for programs or staff. It's always a struggle. As soon as one barrier is overcome another appears.

But know that many of us appreciate what you do and what you have done. It is good and necessary. And no one does it better.

When Margaret Mead was asked what would be the common thread of understanding through all of the civilizations that she studied throughout her extensive

career and she responded, “ Never doubt a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

Happy Anniversary and Please keep changing the world.